

(Washington, DC)— The U.S. House of Representatives today passed the final version of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2010. After passing the Senate, the measure will be signed into law by President Obama. The bill contains a \$500,000 provision secured by Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.) that will allow the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to use new, cutting-edge nanotechnologies recently invented at UWM in the development of new types of solar cells. These cells could be produced at a fraction of the cost of today's solar cells and be at least as efficient or even more efficient.

"If America is going remain a global leader, we're going to have to wean ourselves off foreign oil and figure out how to satisfy our energy needs without subjecting ourselves to the whims of foreign oil suppliers and the unpredictability of global supply and demand," Congresswoman Moore said. "President Obama and this Congress are dedicated to harnessing alternative energy sources like solar and wind to power our cars, heat our homes, and fuel our factories. I am proud that UWM will be helping to lead our country down the road to energy independence.

"The development of solar technology at UWM is also a boon for our local manufacturing sector. These funds will help transfer new solar technologies to area industries and train Wisconsin's metal manufacturers that are facing hard times because of competition from other countries," Moore said.

There are already methods to create lightweight materials with the characteristics necessary to be used for high-efficiency solar cells. The funds secured by Congresswoman Moore would specifically address the challenge of developing a cost-effective way to mass-produce these materials, and to train the metals manufacturing and foundry communities on how to incorporate them into their existing processing lines.

"The College of Engineering and Applied Science at UWM is very excited to receive funding to extend our research efforts on high-efficiency solar cells," said Michael Lovell, Dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Science at UWM. "If solar energy is to become a practical energy source, we must have more efficient ways to convert photons into electricity, fuel and heat. This funding will greatly enhance our ability to create novel nanostructured materials that conquer the tremendous challenges of large-scale commercialization of inexpensive, high output solar cells."

UWM estimates that this project will create about 200 new jobs in Wisconsin, as well as revitalize the foundry and molding industries in Wisconsin and other states.

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